

ART. XI.—*On the Melbourne Great Telescope* By  
H. A. SEVERN, ESQ.

[Read 18th June, 1870.]

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ART. XII.—*Some Notes on the Culture of Opium in Gipps Land.* By JOSEPH BOSISTO, ESQ.

[Read 8th July, 1870, at a Conversazione.]

Two enterprising young men, Messrs. George and Arthur Turpin, engaged in agricultural pursuits on the Macallister River, in Gipps Land, finding the expenses attendant on forwarding their cereal products to a market to be very great, thereby leaving no remuneration for their labour, sought out the farming of other vegetation that would give them hope for better results. One was, on my suggestion, the sleeping poppy—*Papaver somnifera*—the plant which supplies the opium of commerce.

The specimen of opium I have the honour to exhibit this evening is part of a quantity produced by them during last December and January, and which obtained a very ready sale in Melbourne.

Opium is the concentrated sap obtained from the head or capsule of the sleeping poppy, from which we obtain the well-known principle—morphia—besides narcotina, codeia, and others.

The therapeutical or medicinal effect of opium and its preparation are in small doses stimulating, and in larger doses soothing and tranquillising. Opium for centuries has received and continues to receive special notice from medical practitioners throughout the civilized world. The demand, therefore, is very great.

The quality of opium is judged chiefly by its percentage of morphia, and a fair sample should not give less than 8 per cent. Climate, soil, and temperature, affect its nature much; hence we have a variety of qualities obtained from the one kind. Standard opium is considered to be that grown in the Levant, and as opium grown in other parts approach *this* standard so is its value and quality judged.

Some parts of Australia, where the poppy has been grown, have given inferior kinds, and have been recorded by home